

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 011052
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 011052

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 0676, SENT SECSTATE INFO CAIRO 15 JAN:

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 0676

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, IS, EG, US

SUBJ: AGENDA FOR JERUSALEM TALKS

REF: TEL AVIV 0667

1. THIS WILL CONFIRM INFORMATION CONVEYED IN MY TELEPHONE
CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY VANCE EARLY THIS MORNING
(JANUARY 15).

2. AFTER SOME DIFFICULTY IN HAVING HIM AWAKENED, I
TALKED BY PHONE WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN FOR APPROXIMATELY
40 MINUTES AT 0300 HOURS. I EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT
SADAT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ACCEPT ANY OF THE ALTERNATE
FORMULATIONS FOR POINT B IN OUR AGENDA PROPOSAL WHICH
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HAD BEEN SUPPLIED TO ME EARLIER IN THE EVENING BY ATTORNEY
GENERAL BARAK ON THE BASIS OF INSTRUCTIONS FROM BEGIN.
I SAID THAT SINCE IT WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT
BEGIN WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT OUR FORMULATION OF POINT B,
ALTHOUGH WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IT WAS TOTALLY NEUTRAL AND WOULD
PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF BOTH PARTIES, IT WAS NOW CLEAR THAT THERE
WAS NO WAY TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT ON THE AGENDA BEFORE SECRETARY

VANCE'S PLANE WAS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS. THE SECRETARY HAD THEREFORE RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDED HE WOULD HAVE TO POSTPONE HIS DEPARTURE UNTIL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED OVER THE AGENDA BETWEEN THE PARTIES. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT GIVEN THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME HE COULD SPEND AT THE CONFERENCE THAT IT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE FOR HIM TO COME MERELY TO DISCUSS THE AGENDA; HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GET RIGHT TO THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND MAKE HIS ROLE AS USEFUL AS POSSIBLE.

3. I ALSO TOLD BEGIN THAT OUR CURRENT INFORMATION FROM AMBASSADOR EILTS WAS THAT SADAT TOO HAD CONCLUDED THAT HE DID NOT WISH HIS DELEGATION TO LEAVE FOR JERUSALEM UNTIL THE AGENDA MATTER WAS AGREED. I SAID THAT WE WOULD BE TRYING TO PERSUADE HIM TO CHANGE THIS POSITION AND TO SEND HIS DELEGATION AS SCHEDULED SO THAT THE PARTIES COULD WORK DIRECTLY ON THE AGENDA. BUT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER WE WOULD SUCCEED.

4. BEGIN'S INITIAL REACTION TO THIS MESSAGE WAS NOT ONLY SLEEPY BUT ALSO DEFIANT. HE INTERPRETED THE DECISION TO POSTPONE THE VISIT AS A "DEMAND" TO HIM TO YIELD TO BOTH EGYPTIAN AND AMERICAN PRESSURE AND TO ACCEPT OUR AGENDA FORMULATION DESPITE HIS GRAVE CONCERNS ABOUT IT. I FINALLY MANAGED WITH SOME DIFFICULTY TO CALM HIM DOWN AND TO GET THE CONVERSATION ON TO A MORE PRACTICAL LEVEL, BUT WE CAME BACK REPEATEDLY TO A NUMBER OF EMOTIONAL ISSUES WHICH I WILL DISCUSS IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.

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5. ALTHOUGH BEGIN WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY DISTRESSED THAT THE SECRETARY WAS NOT PROCEEDING AS PLANNED, HE INSISTED THAT HE SAW NO WAY TO RESPOND USEFULLY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO MY MESSAGE. HE SAID THAT THE DECISION TO OFFER THE SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS FOR POINT B HAD BEEN TAKEN "UNANIMOUSLY" EARLIER IN THE EVENING BY THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET. HE INSISTED THAT NEITHER HE NOR DAYAN COULD CHANGE IT WITHOUT AGREEMENT OF THAT COMMITTEE, EVEN IF THEY WANTED TO. HE SAW NO WAY TO CONVENE THEM AT 0800 IN THE MORNING. HE DID EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, SAY THAT THE REGULAR CABINET MEETING WOULD BE TAKING PLACE AT 0930 SUNDAY, AND HE WOULD PUT THE WHOLE ISSUE BEFORE THE CABINET AT THAT TIME. HE PROMISED ME A FURTHER RESPONSE AS SOON AS THE CABINET MEETING ENDS, WHICH COULD WELL NOT BE BEFORE EARLY AFTERNOON JANUARY 15.

6. AFTER REPORTING BY TELEPHONE ON THIS CONVERSATION TO THE SECRETARY, I ALSO DISCUSSED IT WITH DAYAN. MEANWHILE DAYAN HAD TALKED WITH DINITZ AND WITH BEGIN. AT THE TIME WE SPOKE (0330), DAYAN SEEMED RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO CALM BEGIN DOWN SUNDAY MORNING AND TO GET HIM TO AGREE TO A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF HIS ALTERNATIVE, WHICH HE HAD NEVER BEEN ABLE TO HAVE BEGIN LISTEN TO SATURDAY NIGHT

IN VIEW HIS EXTREMEM REACTION TO SADAT'S OCTOBER MAGAZINE INTER-
VIEW. THE FORMULATION THAT DAYAN WAS GOING TO TRY HARDEST TO SELL
WAS MERELY ADDING THE WORD "ISSUES" TO OUR LANGUAGE FOR POINT B.
HE MIGHT GO BACK TO THE LONGER FORMULATION CONTAINED
IN PARA 4 OF TEL AVIV 657, PERHAPS WITH SPLIT LANGUAGE TO
EXPRESS THE LAST PHRASE. I URGED HIM TO MAKE EVERY CONCEIVABLE
EFFORT TO GET THIS THING BACK ON THE TRACK BEFORE EMOTIONS IN
CAIRO AND JERUSALEM BOILED OVER IRREVOCABLY. HE ASSURED ME THAT HE
AGREES IT IS LUDICROUS TO HAVE THE MEETINGS CANCELLED OVER A
COUPLE OF WORDS IN THE AGENDA, AND HE WILL DO HIS VERY BEST.

7. THE CABINET IS MEETING AS I DICTATE THIS TELEGRAM. UNFOR-
TUNATELY I HAVE HAD A REPORT THIS MORNING FROM RABBI SHINDLER WHO
SAW BEGIN AT 0830. SCHINDLER SAYS THAT BEGIN IS IN AN EVEN MORE
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ANGUISHED AND DEFIANT MOOD THIS MORNING THAN HE WAS LAST NIGHT
WITH ME, AND SCHINDLER IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE OUTCOME
OF THE CABINET MEETING WITH BEGIN IN HIS PRESENT FRAME OF
MIND. LEWIS UNQUOTE. VANCE

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